

Message Text

SECRET

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45

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 INRE-00 SSO-00

CCO-00 NSCE-00 IO-12 DPW-01 CU-04 NIC-01 RSR-01 /081 W
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O P 191120 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 551

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY

USDEL FRANCE PRIORITY

AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

SECDEF

CJCS

CINCPAC

COMUSMACV

COMUSMACTHAI

COMUSSAG

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 2478

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CB

SUBJECT: PHNOM PENH SITUATION

REF: PHNOM PENH 2442

1. SUMMARY. MILITARY AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES HAVE CONTINUED TO
TAKE A NUMBER OF PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO PREVENT ANY FOLLOW-
UP

TO THE BOMBING ATTACK ON THE PRESIDENTIAL COMPOUND PENDING
FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE ORIGIN OF THIS AND OTHER MARCH 17
EVENTS. RESTRICTIONS HAVE BEEN PLACED ON FOREIGN TRAVEL AND THOSE
ON MEETINGS STRENGTHENED. AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF SO SATTO IS TO
BE REMOVED. SIXTEEN MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY ARE NOW UNDER
HOUSE ARREST. PHNOM PENH CONTINUES VERY QUIET WITH MAXIMUM
SECURITY ALERT. LATEST WORD IS THAT MEKONG CONVOY WILL SAIL
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TOMORROW. END SUMMARY.

2. FANK CHIEF OF STAFF MG SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ INFORMED CHMEDTC TODAY THAT BG SO SATTO IS TO BE REMOVED AS AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF. HE WILL ALSO BE PLACED UNDER 30 DAYS HOUSE ARREST PENDING AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MARCH 17 BOMBING ATTACK. SO SATTO'S DEPUTY COLONEL PENN RANND, WHO MISSION BELIEVES WILL PROVE TO BE BETTER LEADER, WILL REPLACE HIM. SIX AIR FORCE OFFICERS WHO BELONG TO THE ROYAL FAMILY HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED FROM THEIR JOBS, BUT OUR SOURCES WITHIN FANK GENERAL STAFF HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WILL BE CALLED BACK TO DUTY WHEN SITUATION COOLS DOWN.

3. KAF HAS CONTINUED ITS SEARCH FOR THE T-28 USED IN THE ATTACK BUT WITH AS YET NO RESULTS. IN INTERIM, T-28'S HAVE BEEN GROUNDED TO PERMIT EASY IDENTIFICATION OF THIS AIRCRAFT SHOULD IT BE USED FOR ANOTHER ATTACK.

4. SIXTEEN MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY HAVE NOW BEEN PLACED UNDER HOUSE ARREST IN THE HOME OF THE QUEEN MOTHER, ACCORDING TO PRINCESS SISOWATH MONIRETH, WHOSE HUSBAND AND THREE SONS ARE AMONG THE DETAINEES. PRINCESS MONIRETH EMPHATICALLY DENIED THAT THE PILOT ATTACKING THE PRESIDENTIAL COMPOUND IS ACTUALLY MARRIED TO SIHANOUK'S DAUGHTER BUT STATED, AS HAVE SOURCES CLOSE TO THE PILOT, THAT THE TWO HAVE BEEN LIVING TOGETHER FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND THAT BOTUM BOPHA IS PREGNANT WITH SO PHOTRA'S CHILD.

5. THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND SENATE MEETING IN JOINT SESSION THIS MORNING APPROVED A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING "COMPLETE SUPPORT" FOR THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC. A STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR "ALL MEASURES" TAKEN BY THE PRESIDENT TO DEAL WITH THE PRESENT SITUATION WAS, HOWEVER, REMOVED FROM THE ORIGINAL DRAFT DURING DEBATE. ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 39 OF THE CONSTITUTION A STATE OF EMERGENCY MUST BE APPROVED BY PARLIAMENT WITHIN SEVEN DAYS OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROCLAMATION. THE DECISION NOT TO GIVE APPROVAL AT THIS TIME WAS BASED PARTLY UPON A LEGAL TECHNICALITY (THE PROCLAMATION WAS NOT PROPERLY PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT) AND PARTLY UPON THE ARGUMENT THAT THE NECESSITY FOR THE PROCLAMATION WAS NOT YET ABSOLUTELY CLEAR.

6. AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE PROCLAMATION OF EMERGENCY, THE KHMER RADIO BROADCAST AN ORDER BY PRESIDENT LON NOL PROHIBITING
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ALL GATHERINGS OF MORE THAN FIVE PERSONS.

7. AIRPORT AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN REFUSING TO LET FOREIGN NATIONALS AND KHMER LEAVE THE COUNTRY WITHOUT A PERMIT FROM A MIXED GOVERNMENT COMMISSION ESTABLISHED TO MONITOR DEPARTURES. ALTHOUGH MOST AMERICANS WISHING TO DEPART HAVE BEEN ABLE TO

DO SO, SOME HAVE BEEN HELD UP BY THESE NEW PROCEDURES. OUR CONSUL IS ASSISTING.

8. PHNOM PENH HAS REMAINED EXCEPTIONALLY QUIET. SITES OF MARCH APU EVENTS ARE STILL CORDONED OFF AND SECURITY TROOPS REMAIN ON FULL ALERT. WE HAVE JUST HEARD THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY NGUON CHAY KRY, WHO IS CLOSE TO THE ROYAL FAMILY, IS BEING HELD BY THE NATIONAL GENDARMERIE AND WE ARE PICKING UP SPORADIC, AS YET UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF ARRESTS OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS. IF THERE ARE ARRESTS, THEY ARE CLEARLY NOT RPT NL WIDESPREAD.

9. GRADUAL PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE OPERATIONS TO CLEAR THE BANKS OF THE MEKONG. LATEST WORD IS THAT THE CONVOY WILL SAIL TO PHNOM PENH TOMORROW.
SWANK

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*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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